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Implementation of the mobility policy

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in response to the request of the General Assembly in its resolution 61/244 that the Secretary-General report on indicators, benchmarks, number of staff, timelines and criteria for the implementation of mobility policies, taking into account the needs of the Organization and ways to protect the rights of staff in the context of the system of administration of justice. The report is also in follow up to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the mobility policy (A/62/215).

* A/63/150.

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I. Introduction

1. The 2005 World Summit Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1) reaffirmed the role of the Secretary-General as the chief administrative officer of the Organization, and requested him to make proposals to the Assembly on the conditions and measures necessary for him to carry out his managerial responsibilities effectively. The proposals of the Secretary-General were initially presented in his report entitled "Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger Organization worldwide" (A/60/692 and Corr.1). The details of the proposed new human resources framework were elaborated in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Investing in people" (A/61/255 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1) following consultations with managers, staff, including in the Staff Management Coordination Committee (SMCC) and the United Nations funds and programmes and in the context of the inter-agency Human Resources Network.

2. One of the components of the new framework for human resources is the proposal of the Secretary-General for an integrated approach to mobility, envisaged as a way to improve the effectiveness of the Organization and to foster the skills and capacity of staff.

3. The proposals of the Secretary-General were reviewed by the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. In its resolution 61/244, the Assembly encouraged the Secretary-General to continue to make progress in the area of mobility. In recognition of the increased workload it approved additional resources. In this context, the General Assembly also requested in the resolution that the Secretary-General submit a report on the issue.

4. The Assembly also requested that the Secretary-General submit at its sixty-third session a report on the implementation of managed mobility with an assessment and analysis of the relevant issues, including the enforcement of post occupancy limits and financial implications. The present report is in response to that request. It also addresses mobility issues raised by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (see A/62/7/Add.14), the report of the Secretary-General on measures taken to address seven systematic human resources issues raised in the context of the reform of the internal system of administration of justice (see A/63/132), the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on staff mobility in the United Nations (see A/61/806); and, the comments of the Secretary-General on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (see A/61/806/Add.1).

II. Background

5. In the past 20 years, the Organization has experienced a dramatic expansion of its operations, budgets and functions. In addition to its conference servicing responsibilities, the Secretariat today directly manages complex, billion-dollar operations and delivers critical services around the world. In so doing, it works with a wide range of partners, including national Governments, regional organizations, civil society, philanthropic foundations and private sector companies, on a broad range of activities, including of humanitarian, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, human rights, international tribunal, drugs and crime control and other programmes that have a direct impact on the lives of hundreds of millions of people every day.

6. A workforce capable of fulfilling both the normative mandates of headquarters programmes and operational mandates of field activities is the new reality of the United Nations. The mobility of staff is essential to creating such a workforce. It was envisaged that systematic mobility would also help the Organization to:

(a) Increase its flexibility and responsiveness, including the ability to meet rapid deployment requirements, by preparing staff to operate in a multidisciplinary environment;

(b) Improve programme delivery capacity, by addressing chronic vacancy challenges;

(c) Offer increased staff development and career advancement opportunities;

(d) Develop a more comprehensive understanding of, and therefore ability to address, the many facets of the Organization's work programme, through greater integration.

7. The need to increase staff mobility and approach it in a more systematic manner has been an integral part of the human resources strategy of the Secretary-General since the early 1990s. In its resolution 49/222, the General Assembly noted that the human resources strategy of the Secretary-General called for mobility for all new internationally recruited staff, and urged the Secretary General to apply the mobility elements of the new strategy to internationally recruited staff. Later, in its resolution 51/226, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to pursue "the development and implementation of the managed reassignment programmes for entry-level and other staff" and reiterated the importance of making substantive progress towards increased mobility.

8. The General Assembly, in its resolution 53/221, emphasized "the requirement of mobility of all internationally recruited staff of the Organization as an integral part of their obligation", and requested the Secretary-General to "give full consideration to the need for greater mobility in the context of human resources planning, in accordance with staff regulation 1.2 (c)". In the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to "establish mechanisms towards, and to implement a policy of, enhanced mobility across functions, departments and duty stations".

9. In response to that request, the Secretary-General, in his report on human resources management reform (A/55/253), explained how he envisaged implementing the mobility policy, which included the introduction of time limits for post occupancy. The details of the policy are provided in annex III to that report. After the adoption of General Assembly resolution 55/258, the mobility policy was more fully developed and integrated into the new staff selection system, which came into effect on 1 May 2002 (see ST/SGB/2002/5 and ST/AI/2002/4, both issued on 23 April 2002). In subsequent resolutions on human resources management (see resolutions 57/305, sect. II, paras. 47-53, and 59/266, sect. VIII), the Assembly expressed a number of requirements that should be observed in the implementation of the mobility policy. Those requirements are contained in the current policy.

10. An extensive consultative process has been conducted from the inception of the policy through its formal introduction to its current status. Mobility has been discussed in SMCC since 1999. SMCC agreed that mobility should be viewed in its broadest sense, with mobility requirements being fulfilled by movement among

functions, departments, occupations, duty stations and organizations beyond the Secretariat. This statement has become the basis for the definition of mobility used by the Organization in its current policy.

11. Mobility continues to be discussed in staff-management consultations in SMCC. Most recently, a working group comprising staff and management was established following the June 2007 SMCC meeting to monitor the implementation of the mobility policy. Its findings, conclusions and recommendations are included in paragraphs 68 and 69 of this report.

III. Mobility policy

12. The mobility policy was introduced as an integral part of the staff selection system (see ST/SGB/2002/5, ST/AI/2002/4, ST/AI/2005/8, ST/AI/2006/3 and ST/AI/2007/2) to support, inter alia, the development of a more versatile, multi-skilled and experienced international civil service, and the promotion of greater integration among staff throughout the Secretariat.

13. The main principles guiding the policy are as follows:

(a) Mobility is not an end in itself, but a tool to enable the United Nations to fulfil its operational requirements more effectively;

(b) Mobility patterns vary depending on the requirements of the job and the location;

(c) Mobility is a shared responsibility between the Organization, managers and staff, in which all must play an active role;

(d) Mobility will be integral to career patterns; career progression will depend partially on evidence of mobility.

14. The mobility policy takes into consideration the scope and nature of the work of the Organization, which differs significantly from other international organizations, including those in the United Nations common system.

15. Mobility, defined in its broadest sense, includes movement within and between departments, functions, occupational groups, duty stations and organizations of the United Nations system. A movement to a different position can be at the same level, which is considered to be a lateral move, or to a higher level. The new position may be in the same or a different department or office, in the same or a different duty station, or in the same or a different occupational group.

16. The mobility policy was formally established in May 2002 when the limits on post occupancy (five years up to the P-5 level and six years above the P-5 level) were introduced. The post occupancy period starts anew each time the staff member moves as a result of selection under the staff selection system, within a managed reassignment programme or as a lateral move to a post with different functions.

17. The policy links mobility to career development, requiring two lateral moves before promotion to the P-5 level. It also includes incentives to encourage movement to duty stations with high vacancy rates by permitting staff who have served in Nairobi or in a regional commission other than the Economic Commission for Europe more rapid career progression by requiring only one lateral move.

18. Since 2000, programmes facilitating mobility for staff at the P-2 level have been managed. In offers and letters of appointment, candidates recruited through competitive examination are informed that, when accepting a post in the Organization, they will be expected to serve in two different functions during their first five years of service in the Organization. Such staff are eligible to participate in a managed reassignment programme sometime between their second and third year of service with the Organization. During the managed reassignment programme, staff may apply to P-2 posts in different duty stations, departments, offices and occupational groups. The Office of Human Resources Management conducts a central matching exercise, taking into account the criteria established by managers, the needs of the Organization, and the qualifications and preferences of staff.

19. As a result, since 2000, experience with the P-2 staff demonstrated that when a mobility policy was put in place, staff proactively sought to comply with the policy before being required to do so. In short, over one half of the P-2 staff (51.5 per cent) subject to the mobility policy changed functions outside of a managed reassignment programme. Those moves were as follows: approximately 23 per cent were promoted and 28.5 per cent moved laterally; or were temporarily reassigned within or across departments, duty stations, peacekeeping missions and the United Nations common system. That left less than one half (48.5 per cent) of the P-2 staff requiring to be moved through managed reassignments by the Office of Human Resources Management.

IV. Implementation of the mobility policy

20. Since 2002, systematic efforts have been made to introduce the concept of mobility and create programmes and mechanisms to prepare and support staff. Achievements and activities in that respect have been reported in detail in the reports of the Secretary-General on human resources management reform (see A/61/228 and Corr.1 and A/61/255 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1).

21. The main aspects of these preparations include a communication strategy, expanded learning and training opportunities, and greater focus on work-life issues.

A. Communication strategy

22. After the promulgation of administrative instruction ST/AI/2002/4, which institutionalized managed mobility and introduced post occupancy limits for all posts from the G-5 to the D-2 level, a communication campaign was undertaken to familiarize staff globally with the new staff selection system.

23. In 2005, a global information campaign was launched to continue to build awareness among the staff at large of the mobility policy and inform them of the support available to help them to prepare for mobility. Printed and electronic materials containing answers to frequently asked questions and suggestions on preparing for mobility were made widely available on i-Seek. In addition, a dedicated website was launched, and continues to be maintained, to provide staff with up-to-date information on mobility.

24. Additional information on mobility was also provided during the human resources reform outreach in 2006, when reform teams visited 31 duty stations and

met with some 5,000 staff members to provide an opportunity to discuss all aspects of reform, including mobility.

25. In 2007 and 2008, targeted information-sharing campaigns were conducted for staff members who were reaching their post occupancy limits beginning in May 2007. That included both group and one-to-one meetings to ensure understanding of the programme and the support mechanisms available to staff and managers.

B. Training, learning and career support

26. In order to ensure that staff were prepared for mobility, a number of initiatives were undertaken to support staff, including: (a) expanded staff development and career support programmes; (b) the establishment of career resource centres in all major duty stations; (c) a revised electronic performance appraisal system (e-PAS), which includes a career development goal, a learning goal and expression of interest in mission assignment; and (d) the issuance, online, of generic job profiles covering the majority of Professional (P) and General Service posts (G-5 and higher), to clarify job expectations.

1. Expanded staff development and career support programmes

27. A new and enhanced development programme was launched Secretariat-wide, including special career development workshops, to provide staff with new skills and competencies, promote culture change and create awareness of the benefits of mobility.

2. Establishment of career resource centres in all major duty stations

28. The career resource centre, a component of the United Nations Secretariat career development system, is a resource for staff and managers offering career planning and development information, mobility support, learning opportunities and career counselling, while at the same time assisting with the continuous professional growth of staff at all levels. The career resource centres have been encouraging and supporting mobility through networking meetings, information sessions on job opportunities in different duty stations, and peacekeeping missions.

29. Over 5,600 staff members have used the career resource centre at Headquarters since its opening in September 2002 for workshops and individual consultations. By 2007, career resource centres had been established for staff at all offices away from Headquarters and in regional commissions. In 2007, almost 1,400 staff members used the services of the centre in New York, while nearly 1,300 staff members used the centres in other offices away from Headquarters and in regional commissions.

30. Staff can utilize services including written, video and web-based materials and individual career counselling. The centres also provide workshops on topics including career change, networking, preparing job applications (personal history profiles), competency-based interviews and reputation management.

3. Electronic performance appraisal system

31. The e-PAS strengthens the link to career development by encouraging dialogue between staff members and supervisors on their career aspirations and competencies needed for future assignments. It also includes an opportunity for staff members to

indicate their interest in going on a field mission as well as a development and learning goal.

4. Generic job profiles

32. Generic job profiles were developed in 2002 to streamline the classification process and to facilitate the first stage of the staffing process by reducing the amount of time spent in drafting and classifying unique job descriptions prior to the circulation of posts. The use of these profiles has contributed to greater standardization, efficiency, speed and transparency in creating vacancy announcements and clarifying job expectations. The generic job profiles are also continually reviewed and updated to ensure that their content is current.

C. Work-life issues

33. One of the critical obstacles to mobility is the serious difficulty faced by dual-career families. The Organization has made efforts to examine and address work and life issues. Links have been established with associations that provide assistance in this respect. The United Nations has also participated in an inter-agency project fostered by the United Nations Development Group to establish expatriate spouse-support networks at field duty stations. In addition, the General Assembly, in its resolution 61/244, invited host countries, as appropriate, to review their policies for granting work permits to spouses of United Nations staff. The Office of Human Resources Management has been assisting in facilitating the work permits for spouses.

34. The Organization continues to address work-life issues that impede mobility and are a barrier to achieving gender parity, in particular concerns affecting women and staff with family responsibilities, including by:

(a) Making every effort, when determining the timing of a geographical reassignment, to minimize the disruption of work in the duty station involved and to facilitate linkages with leave and school calendar requirements and the needs of staff with children with special needs;

(b) Giving priority consideration to staff who have served in hardship or non-family duty stations for headquarters or family duty station postings. The preferences expressed by staff members serving in hardship duty stations (C to E classifications) would be given greater weight than those of other staff members when they apply to posts in the mobility compendium;

(c) Expanding possibilities for dual-career couples, for example by providing career counselling and job search assistance; exploring telecommuting options for spouses; and giving priority consideration to spouses for consulting opportunities, where appropriate;

(d) Within the managed reassignment programme, the Office of Human Resources Management, in cooperation with managers, gives priority to relocation of spouses, subject to availability of suitable posts and satisfactory performance.

35. In recognition of the demands that mobility and relocations place on international Professional staff members and their families and the resulting disruption to personal lives, provisions have been put in place to take into account

family and other special constraints, to the extent possible. In addition, the Organization will continue to explore approaches to facilitate the geographic movement of international Professional staff members, including systematic means and incentives to give priority consideration to dual-career families.

D. Maintaining institutional capacity

36. The mobility policy has been implemented in a gradual and phased manner in order to maintain continuity and quality of service and the institutional memory and capacity of the Organization. In order to ensure that increased mobility does not adversely affect institutional capacity, the Secretariat is actively supporting and developing knowledge management practices. Such practices are important not only for maintaining continuity and quality of service and institutional memory in the context of the implementation of the mobility policy, but also because of anticipated high rates of retirement in the coming years.

37. Managers are responsible for establishing systems that will support mobility, including introducing standard operating procedures to facilitate knowledge management and the preservation of institutional memory, and undertaking succession planning and cross-training to ensure that the institutional capacity to deliver is preserved.

38. Knowledge management initiatives have included rotating staff through different assignments to expand the knowledge base and broaden the shared institutional memory. Many departments have launched such initiatives, which has contributed significantly to the increase in reassignments within departments since 2002.

E. Human resources information technology

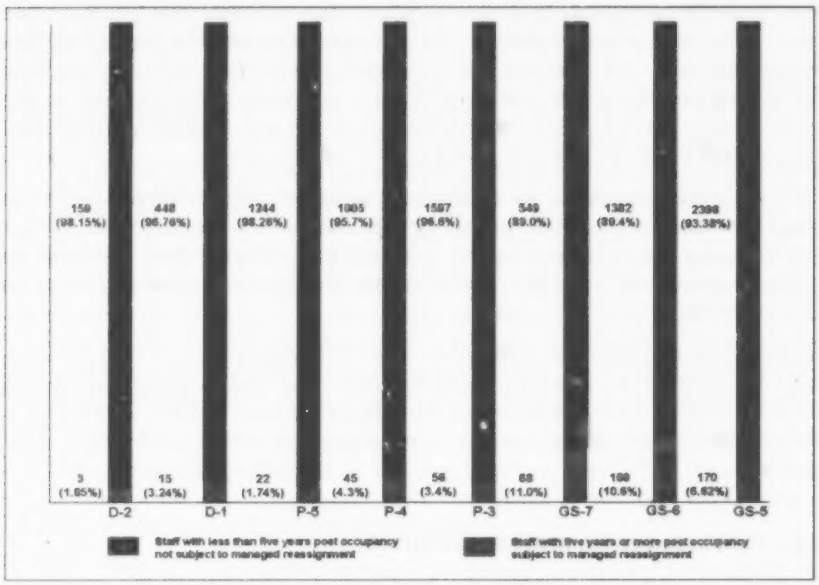
39. In order to ensure the effective implementation of the mobility policy, in particular the managed reassignment programme, extensive preparations took place to enhance organizational information technology tools and to ensure accuracy of records. A dedicated website was designed to provide staff with up-to-date information on the latest developments, including policies and procedures, timelines and learning opportunities. In addition, staff are able to address their queries to a specific e-mail address to get answers from the mobility team in the Office of Human Resources Management.

40. The current information technology system posed numerous challenges, including the accuracy of the records, all of which had to be verified. As a first step, staff who were identified to be reaching their post occupancy limit were requested to complete an electronic fact sheet. This gave an opportunity for staff to rectify any inaccuracies, or to provide missing information in their records. This information was reviewed in cooperation with responsible officials and adjustments were made as necessary. It is anticipated that with the introduction of the forthcoming new talent management system some of these technological challenges will be overcome.

V. Managed reassignment programme

41. One element of the mobility policy is managed reassignment. Staff members who have reached the maximum post occupancy limit are subject to managed reassignment. The managed reassignment programmes have been implemented level by level, in a gradual and phased manner.

Figure
Staff subject to managed reassignment (maximum post occupancy)



42. As can be seen in the above figure, the percentage of staff who reached maximum post occupancy was minimal. Owing to the extensive informational campaign undertaken by the Office of Human Resources Management, from the inception of the mobility policy in 2002, to raise awareness about the advantages of movement, it was expected that many, if not most, would have already taken appropriate steps to move to other positions. Indeed, this was found to be the case in May 2007, when the first managed reassignment programme commenced, and continued to be the case for the second and third programmes. This validated the premise that when a mobility policy is put in place, staff take the initiative to broaden their skills. At the same time, many managers facilitate such moves to obtain different skills and/or build institutional capacity within departments.

43. According to data derived from human resources action plans, the staff mobility index[1] has increased significantly, from 10.8 per cent in 2002, to 21.0 per cent in 2006 and to 27.6 per cent in 2007. That increase confirms that greater awareness and a proactive approach, coupled with expanded learning and career

[1] Mobility index: the annual ratio of the combined number of staff who have moved within and between functions, departments, occupations, duty stations and United Nations organizations compared to the total number of staff in the same department at the beginning of the year.

development programmes, leads to increased mobility outside of managed reassignment.

A. Criteria for implementation

44. The criteria for implementation of the managed reassignment programme are set out in administrative instruction ST/AI/2007/2, which applies to staff appointed at the G-5 to D-2 levels for one year or longer under the 100 series of the Staff Rules who will have reached the maximum post occupancy limit by the time the managed reassignment programme relating to their levels is launched. The managed reassignment programmes under administrative instruction ST/AI/2007/2 do not apply to the following staff members:

(a) Mission staff whose appointment is limited to a particular field mission;

(b) Staff whose appointment is limited to a particular office or programme, as these staff members are subject to a separate managed reassignment programme within the office or programme concerned;

(c) Language staff, defined as including interpreters, translators/précis-writers, editors, verbatim reporters, proofreaders/copy preparers, revisers, terminologists, text processors, language reference assistants and editorial assistants who were appointed after passing a competitive examination for posts requiring special language skills. They will also be subject to a special managed reassignment programme applying to language staff serving at the main duty stations and in the regional commissions;

(d) Staff members in the General Service and related categories who perform the functions of tour guide, language teacher, security and trades and crafts;

(e) Staff members within three years of retirement.

45. The administrative instruction also provides for exemptions for a staff member to participate in a specific exercise. Such exemptions are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and may be granted for a number of reasons, including valid medical grounds or when the technical requirement of the post or its degree of specialization cannot be met by other staff participating in the managed reassignment exercise.

B. Timelines for implementation

1. P-3/G-7 managed reassignment programme

46. The managed reassignment programme for staff at the P-3 and G-7 levels commenced in May 2007. As mentioned above, to determine which of these staff members exceeded the five-year maximum post occupancy limit, the Office of Human Resources Management, executive and human resources offices first reviewed the status of all staff, level by level. To ensure that all moves had been properly recorded, individual staff members were also requested to complete electronic fact sheets and correct any possible errors or omissions. At the end of this process, of the 1,653 staff members at the P-3 level with appointments of one year or more, only 56 (3.4 per cent) had reached maximum post occupancy. Similarly, of the 617 staff members at the G-7 level worldwide with appointments of one year or

more, only 68 (11 per cent) had reached maximum post occupancy and were deemed identified as eligible for the managed reassignment programme.

47. Exemptions from the mobility requirement were granted on the basis of medical conditions of staff; personal and family circumstances; highly specialized functions; and, the limited number of G-7 posts in some duty stations. At the completion of the exercise, 16 P-3 and 10 G-7 staff members had moved; 19 P-3 and 31 G-7 staff members had been exempted; and, 21 P-3 and 27 G-7 staff members had been unable to move. Many of the staff who were not able to move were unable to do so because their skills were not compatible with the opportunities in the managed reassignment programme. Of the 16 P-3 staff members who moved, two changed duty stations, at a total cost of $80,500.

2. P-4/G-6 managed reassignment programme

48. The programme began in November 2007. After confirmation of post occupancies through the electronic fact sheet exercise, of the 1,050 staff members at the P-4 level with appointments of one year or more, only 45 (4.3 per cent) had reached maximum post occupancy. Of the 1,551 G-6 staff members worldwide with appointments of one year or more, only 169 (10.6 per cent) had reached maximum post occupancy and were deemed eligible for the managed reassignment programme. At the completion of the exercise, three P-4 and 20 G-6 staff members had moved; 19 P-4 and 75 G-6 staff members had been exempted; and, 23 P-4 and 74 G-6 staff members had been unable to move. As was the case with the P-3 G-7 exercise, many staff members were unable to move because their skills were not compatible with the opportunities in the managed reassignment programme. Of the three P-4 staff members who moved, no changes in duty stations occurred.

3. P-5/G-5 managed reassignment programme

49. The programme commenced in May 2008. After confirmation of post occupancies through the electronic fact sheet exercise, of the 1,266 staff members at the P-5 level with appointments of one year or more, only 22 (1.74 per cent) had reached maximum post occupancy; and, of the 2,568 G-5 staff worldwide with appointments of one year or more, only 170 (6.62 per cent) had reached maximum post occupancy and were deemed eligible for the managed reassignment programme before exemptions had been approved. At the completion of the exercise, which is expected to be by early November 2008, final statistics will be provided reflecting the number of P-5 and G-5 staff members who moved, were exempted and were unable to move.

4. D-1/D-2 managed reassignment programme

50. The programme is envisaged to commence in November 2008. Staff at the D-1 and D-2 levels with appointments of one year or more will be reviewed for inclusion in this programme. It is expected that this review will be completed in the coming months. There are currently 463 D-1 and 162 D-2 staff members with appointments of one year or more. Of these, 15 D-1 (3.24 per cent) and three D-2 (1.85 per cent) have been identified as having reached their maximum post occupancies. At the completion of the exercise, which is expected to be by December 2008, final statistics will be available.

51. This gradual approach has served to embed mobility in the organizational culture, and has provided sufficient flexibility to adjust the policy as necessary. Therefore, in light of the experience of the managed reassignment programme thus far, it would be prudent to explore other means of achieving the objectives, especially in light of the low percentage of staff who reached their maximum post occupancies and who needed to participate in a managed reassignment programme (see figure in para. 41).

C. Indicators, benchmarks and numbers of staff

52. The mobility of staff is considered as one means of creating a more versatile, multi-skilled and experienced staff capable of fulfilling the organizational complex mandates. An essential aspect of this policy is the commitment to continuous learning and its link to career development. In order to be able to analyse the impact of the mobility policy in the future, to ensure that it is achieving its intended purpose, the current status will serve as a baseline for future reviews.

53. In this context, a number of indicators and benchmarks were identified to ensure that refinement of the mobility policy would be a continuous process in which the Organization would continually seek to improve its practices. The indicators reflect staff mobility in general and include types of movement, including lateral moves, promotions and assignments. An additional indicator of staff movement through managed reassignment was added to this report.

54. Mobility indicators from May 2002 to May 2007 reflect movement of staff prior to the expansion of the managed reassignment programme for staff other than at the P-2 level, as shown below:

Mobility	*2002**	*2006**	*2007**
Number of staff	8 415	8 437	8 633
Promotion	730	944	1 108
Reassignment within department	218	374	603
Transfer between departments/offices	90	277	128
Assignment other than a field mission	94	98	350
Assignment to a field mission	96	39	136
Inter-agency mobility	29	36	58
Managed reassignment programme			49**
Mobility index	**10.8 per cent**	**21.0 per cent**	**27.6 per cent**

* Number of staff counted as at 31 December of the preceding year.
** Number of P-3/G-7 and P-4/G-6 movements in 2007/2008.

D. Monitoring and protective measures

55. The managed reassignment programmes have been implemented as flexibly as possible to take into account both the operational needs of the Organization and the aspirations and personal or family circumstances of staff members. In order to

ensure that the mobility policy is achieving its intended purpose, the policy has been monitored closely by the Office of Human Resources Management and is continually being reviewed.

56. Recognizing the necessity to ensure consistency in application of the criteria, taking into account the needs of the Organization and protection of the rights of staff, the managed reassignment programmes are centrally coordinated for all international staff. Programmes for staff in the General Service and related categories are implemented at respective duty stations, under the guidance of, and with oversight by, the Office of Human Resources Management. All requests for exemptions are reviewed and decided on by the Office. In addition, staff members can avail themselves of the informal and formal mechanisms of the system of administration of justice should they consider administrative decisions to be incorrect.

57. Furthermore, as agreed in SMCC in June 2007, the working group, comprised of staff and management representatives to monitor the implementation of the mobility policy, presented its observations and recommendations to the SMCC plenary in June 2008. The working group concluded that there was no contention between staff and management on the broad concept of mobility, as expressed in General Assembly resolution 55/258. There was general agreement that mobility would contribute to both strengthening the Organization and the skill sets of staff members, but there were diverging views on the success of the managed mobility programme, on the mechanisms used to implement the programme, and on the need to treat all categories of staff equally in the process.

58. The working group identified many areas that required further clarification and/or review in determining the way forward, including the outcome of deliberations of the General Assembly on related human resources matters, such as the harmonization of contracts and conditions of service. While considerable movement of staff between and within departments had been noted, it was felt that greater geographic mobility would only be achieved following the successful resolution of major impediments such as spouse employment, the effective transfer of knowledge, work-life issues and the broader dissemination of information on financial incentives linked to mobility and hardship.

59. Nevertheless, at SMCC it was agreed by both management and staff that the first round of managed mobility be completed to ensure consistent treatment among all levels of staff affected by the policy. Pending completion of the D-1/D-2 exercise, envisaged to commence in November 2008, the managed mobility programmes would be suspended, so that a review could be undertaken over the course of the next year to incorporate lessons learned.

VI. Observations

60. The overall aim of mobility is to contribute to the development of a versatile and multi-skilled workforce, and to stimulate learning and development of skills. In this context, the mobility policy encourages staff movement, including by applying for posts under the staff selection system, through the managed reassignment programmes, opportunities for mission detail and other temporary assignments, and service with organizations of the common system.

61. This approach to mobility represents a significant change for staff and managers as, until now, staff movements were for the most part not systematically encouraged or centrally coordinated. It is recognized that, as with any organizational change in a large, complex environment, this new approach may give rise to concerns. These concerns will continue to be addressed through communication, training and counselling on a one-to-one basis when necessary. At the same time, it should be noted that many staff welcome the expanded opportunities that the mobility policy enables.

62. As stated in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Investing in people" (A/61/255), much can and should be done to improve mobility, as the current policy applies only to a limited number of staff recruited under the 100 series of the Staff Rules. Thus, until the Organization has one contract and one series of Staff Rules (100 series) for all staff, the Organization cannot fully harness the valuable experience, skills and knowledge of large numbers of staff. More duty stations would then be available to more staff to move more easily without jeopardizing their status or development.

63. The increasingly integrated nature of the work of the Organization in the field, evidenced most clearly by Security Council mandates for "integrated" United Nations peace operations, demands a workforce that has an integrated Headquarters and field perspective and is able to work collaboratively across the common system, including the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. All United Nations staff members should have equal access to opportunities in the Organization and equal responsibility to share the burden of service in hardship duty stations, and contribute their services to challenging field activities.

64. The integrated nature of work makes movement within the United Nations common system increasingly important. However, the current policies do not easily facilitate movement across the system. Inter-agency movement is further impacted by unequal conditions of service, as the funds and programmes offer better compensation packages that also improve work-life balance in non-family duty stations. Thus, while some progress has been made in this area, additional measures are required to address this major concern of harmonization of conditions of service.

65. In order to achieve what the mobility policy originally set out to do, namely increase flexibility and responsiveness; improve programme delivery capacity; address chronic vacancy challenges; and develop a more comprehensive understanding of, and ability to address, the many facets of the work of the Organization through greater integration, the Organization needs to operate under one series of Staff Rules.

66. Furthermore, with the establishment of more proactive and strategic workforce planning based on a systematic analysis of the supply and demand requirements, together with the use of rosters and skills inventories, the Organization will be in a better position to undertake a full assessment and do a proper analysis to refine the policies in the light of experience. Strategic workforce planning is essential to assess existing skills gaps that may have resulted from the increase in the mobility index from 10.8 per cent (2002) to 27.6 per cent (2007).

67. Therefore, while the Secretariat is strongly committed to mobility as a means to develop a more versatile, multi-skilled and experienced international civil

service, and to promote greater integration of staff throughout the Secretariat, including in field operations, more work needs to be done.

VII. Conclusion

68. The Organization will continue to refine the policies in the light of experience. As endorsed by SMCC, the managed reassignment programmes will be suspended in their current format after the final exercise is concluded for the staff at the D-1 and D-2 levels. Also endorsed by SMCC, a comprehensive review of the mobility policy will be undertaken in consultation with all stakeholders, including staff, managers and Member States. The policy needs to be further refined and would take into account recommendations emanating from the Human Resources Management Task Force.

69. Recommendations include:

(a) To review the following elements of mobility:

(i) Functional and occupational mobility for staff at the Professional and higher levels with a view to increasing geographical mobility;

(ii) Enforcement of post occupancy limits;

(iii) Incentives for staff members to move to duty stations with high vacancy rates;

(iv) Ways to address challenges faced by families (e.g., spouse employment) and non-traditional arrangements;

(v) Exchange programmes with international organizations outside the United Nations system;

(vi) Ways to enhance career development of locally recruited staff in lieu of managed reassignment programmes;

(vii) Mapping of posts (rotational/non-rotational);

(b) To institute a programme to publicly recognize and reward service in the field;

(c) To incorporate a "mobility requirement" in new offers of appointment, reappointments and contracts for Professional staff with appointments of one year or longer when mobility is redefined or during the exercise for the conversion of contracts, whichever is earlier;

(d) To undertake additional efforts to address work and life issues, such as improvements to host country agreements to enable spouses to work and for family members to remain in the country when the staff member is in another duty station temporarily;

(e) To establish occupational networks, originally introduced in Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2002/5, as an integral component of the staff selection system to create a more strategic approach to mobility. Occupational networks would:

(i) Encourage and support mobility by building on affinities between functions; breaking down departmental silos; strengthening multidisciplinary

approaches and creating a more versatile, multi-skilled and experienced international civil service;

(ii) Promote greater opportunities for staff for the development of their skills, experience and competencies through career paths;

(iii) Facilitate the projections of overall occupation-wide staffing needs, and assist in the deployment of staff among departments, established duty stations and field missions, and address the high vacancy rate.

70. **The Secretary-General invites the General Assembly to take note of 'his report.**